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WHEN GOD'S PROMISES ARE NOT UNDERSTOOD, MEN ARE ILL PREPARED TO RECEIVE THE FULFILMENT OF THEM.

A Sermon,

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Delivered on a public occasion,

MALACHI iii. 2.—"*But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap.*"

IT is no uncommon thing for men to be exceedingly dissatisfied and disappointed upon coming into possession of something which they have long desired and expected. Men seem naturally inclined to think that what they expect will greatly exceed all they possess. It is this hope that keeps some men alive, and carries them on through life; so that in some cases we should pronounce this a *good*, rather than an *evil;* but in others it is a sad and lamentable disaster—a thing long promised, and long waited for, with the most anxious desire—it comes at last, but turns out to be as far from the thing expected as if no promise had allured, as if no intimation of it had excited the fond hope, and fostered the panting desire: indeed so far from the hope being realized, all is disappointment, mortification, and disgust. It was not very unlike this with the Jews, upon the appearing of their MESSIAH. What prophecy had said of Him, they had either misunderstood, or very heedlessly considered. They had been, as a nation, long in a

state of affliction, subject to one dominant power or another, for ages. Their expectation was, and they thought the prophets had told them so, that the promised Messiah would deliver them from thraldom, perplexity, and disgrace, and "restore again the kingdom to Israel." When JESUS, however, appeared, and declared himself to be the promised Saviour, they could see nothing in him to justify such pretensions, nothing to meet their high expectations. Jesus of Nazareth, the son of a carpenter, a poor man of no character, of no connexions, of no influence—nothing but a mere prophet or teacher—able only to associate with him a few poor men, fishermen, or carpenters like himself! How confounded they must have been!

Considering the views the Jews had taken up on the character of the expected Messiah, it was not to be wondered at that they should manifest no regard to Jesus the son of Joseph. Yet, notwithstanding, he was that very SAVIOUR foretold and promised; and prophecy too, had foreseen and foretold this same circumstance, namely, the disappointment of the Jewish nation upon his asserted claims, and their rejection of him. Isaiah had predicted it. "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men, we esteemed him not." Could any words have been more descriptive of the fact? It is more like history than prophecy.

Thus with the seer Malachi, whose words we have selected for the subject of our present address. He represents the Jews as very solicitous for the coming of the ANOINTED: the promises of God as given them are very comforting, and by them their expectations are quickened and wrought up—the coming of the Messiah was every thing to them—they were wrapped up in the promise. "Behold I will send my Messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT, whom ye delight in: behold HE shall come, saith JEHOVAH OF HOSTS. But who may abide the day of his coming,"

who will receive him and abide his laws?—"and who will stand when he appeareth,"—who will stand firm in the faith of him, and who will stand the trial of his judgment? You think that upon his coming and appearance, the hearts of all the Jews' enemies will melt—that the usurped dominion of Persia and its successors in power will fall at once before Messiah's sword. Ah, vain expectation! the enemies he is coming to subdue, and the kingdom he shall establish, are not of this world: he is coming to set up a pure and spiritual religion; to reprove the wicked, and to humble the proud. "For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap."—the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning are characteristic of his throne. This judgment of Messiah's sceptre will be instituted upon the tribes of Israel themselves, not upon their enemies—"who then may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth?"

The subject is now before us, and it is this, WHEN GOD'S PROMISES ARE NOT DISTINCTLY UNDERSTOOD, MEN ARE ILL PREPARED TO MEET THE FULFILMENT OF THEM. Thus it was with the Jewish people, they did not distinctly understand the promise relating to the Messiah, so that when he came they could not receive him. On this subject we have two articles for discussion. FIRST, *That it is important for the church to ponder well the promises of Jehovah, that his covenant may be well understood.* SECOND, *That when God's promises are apprehended, great and strong faith will be necessary in order to abide the fulfilment of them.* May all needed grace be afforded us in the discussion and application of this subject.

FIRST, *It is important that the church should ponder well the promises of Jehovah, in order that his covenant may be correctly apprehended and duly appreciated.* God stands in a peculiar relation to his people as a body redeemed and sanctified; every individual of his chosen is precious in his sight, and is attended through all the changing scenes of life with a father's care. But his chosen *gathered* and *embodied into church fellowship*, are more peculiarly precious, and to them he is pledged in more sacred covenant. This idea is well expressed by the royal psalmist, "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings

of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee O city of God." And there is much to the same point in the prophets. Thus the church is left by our prophet Malachi, the last authorised scribe on the old Testament canon. "Remember ye the law of Moses my servant which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel with the statutes and judgments." This was an admonition to the church then embodied in the tribes of Israel. To this people is the promise of the coming Messiah, and this solemn warning. But who may abide the day of his coming. Thus our prophet left the church to ponder the promise and wait its fulfilment. As he binds up the testimony, and seals the visions of the law, the character of God's people is handed down to succeeding generations upon a principle of godly fellowship, and saintly conversation, they are known and to be known, not so much as the "house of Israel"—"the temple of the Lord—a royal nation, or a kingdom of priests;" this splendor passes off and this same people are recognised in God's book of remembrance, in these terms. "You that fear my name—them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name." And when this "book of remembrance" was opened, after having been sealed four hundred years, few only were found to meet the description of former times, and these were not among the rulers and priests, but with a remnant "waiting for the consolation of Israel, looking for the day-spring from on high to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide their feet in the way of peace." This is God's people, his church with whom he is in covenant; and they are a people of the same character, and in order to preserve that character, and to magnify it, they should ponder God's promises, and wait upon him, that they may know what is the mind and will of God concerning them.

1. Under this head it is necessary to observe, that *all promises of temporal good and of mere outward and visible prosperity, should be taken in a very limited sense.* God's promises to Israel were very full of this world—corn, and wine, and oil, a land flowing with milk and honey, peace and riches, and the homage of other nations—at length a royal city, a great and mighty king, a magnificent temple, a splendid priesthood and costly ritual. To all this Israel attained—and in the attainment what did Israel possess:—

all vanished in a little time like smoke; their good land was invaded and spoiled, their city sacked and burnt, their temple and altar levelled with the dust, "the gold became dim, the fine gold changed! the stones of the sanctuary poured out at the top of every street, the precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hand of the potter." For seventy years was Zion covered with a cloud; the church sojourning during that period in a strange land, among strangers and oppressors. To the seculars, no doubt, this state of the church appeared gloomy and discouraging: and to all such as were wrapped up in the outward trappings of the tabernacle, things must have worn a dismal aspect. But the time of the captivity, was a season that produced Israelites of a character, not known in any former period, since Moses pitched the tabernacle in the desert. EZRA, NEHEMIAH, and MALACHI, children of the captivity, were such men, as Solomon in all his glory showed not. If, under the old Testament dispensation, to the well-being of which so much temporal good was necessary, so little of that good was after all perpetuated, we may well conclude that Christians should be very moderate in their calculations upon the promises of outward and visible prosperity. It is important that we should have a good understanding here, for whether Christians, individually, or in their collective and church capacity, reckon on the fulfilment of God's promises on the bestowment of what is purely of this world, they will be liable to err, and the error will be attended with mortification and disappointment. Hence it is that many are sullen and peevish, and discontented, and full of murmurings, conclude that God hath dealt hardly with them, and not fulfilled his promise, while God hath absolutely promised them no such thing as they expected, but rather the reverse; which leads us

2. To observe *that God's promises should be considered and applied in the same spirit and character in which God has given them.* To be more explicit. By these promises, I mean those that are made to the wise and good as such: promises that are made to them as the children of his kingdom. Some good men, and such as act in the fear of God, and walk before him with an honest heart, men acting with pure designs and motives, expect, that

in well doing they shall enjoy peace and tranquillity, with the good opinion of all around—good neighbourhood and good society: but the question is, has God promised this to his people in their covenanted character? and is there any ground for this expectation? Our text leads us to the examination of this question. It is to be believed, that many good people have fallen into a great mistake on this very point. The first followers of Christ did so, and it was the frequent, nay, the almost constant work of their master to warn them against it, and to set them right. Not only had Jesus to correct the views of his disciples on the subject of his kingdom and government, but he had to show them that the spirituality and godliness of his followers would become the occasion of offence to the ungodly—he tells them this to correct a mistake into which he saw they had fallen—it was not mere information, but correction. "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on the earth? I tell ye nay, but rather division, for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother—and a man's foes shall be they of his own household." Who could have expected such a description of gospel times from the Prince of peace himself—the lamb of God—the meek and lowly Jesus! This was not a description of what should befall apostles and primitive confessors, but of what should come upon the more ordinary servants and followers of Christ in their common every day walk, such as parents and children, and masters and servants, and brothers and friends. Just as Jesus Christ had told them, so it came to pass, and to this fact he refers in the parable of the sower. "He that received seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it,"—he is quite in raptures on his attainment, he thinks it is a fine thing, every body too must think so, he makes no doubt but it will be popular, he even blesseth himself that he should have been so happy as to have accepted it. "But by and by tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word and he is offended." This man little thought that religion would become such a test of character, so as to expose him

to reproach from the world—when he finds this out he is quite disappointed, he is *offended* and turns aside. Now if the followers of Christ had only considered what their master had said, there had been no mistake on this head. Nothing could be more plainly expressed, than what he said on this article of Christian experience, as we have seen; yea, he more distinctly set this matter before them in words still stronger than those already cited. "The time will come," said he to his disciples, "when he that killeth you will think he doeth God service." So that these disciples, if they considered duly their master's words, would expect nothing but tribulation and distress for his sake. And the tribulation of those days passed on to succeeding times. For the first three centuries the church was cruelly persecuted: and I am inclined to a persuasion, that when the fury of the persecuting spirit stayed, it was more on account of the decline of christianity, than of its conquests and its triumphs—religion in its more visible establishment had become a worldly thing, and the world which loves its own, took it into favour, and so it has continued under various forms, more or less, to this day. Indeed the time is not yet come, when real religion is in the highest esteem, nor have we as yet, arrived in that happy land where the people are all righteous. As yet the world—its principles, its maxims, its considerations, its whole spirit in almost every pursuit, abundantly outweighs all those considerations which may be gathered from the promises of a heavenly and spiritual world:—as yet it is not saying too much, that, "the world lieth in wickedness;" and such is its spirit and temper, that there can be no harmony between it and genuine christianity. Now, if things be really so, then a faithful attachment to Christ, and a decided profession of his religion will be attended with some inconvenience, some loss of ease, some trouble and discomfiture. Nor has God promised his faithful people exemption from such trials; and all those who have escaped this experience, it is to be feared, have fallen short of the character by which our Lord describes his followers. "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own, but I have chosen you out of the world, *therefore*, the world hateth you."

There are those among us who make the quiet, peaceful, uniu-

terrupted career of a professing Christian, a test of good character: but this is a false standard. I know well that a professed follower of Jesus, say a minister, may so watch, and check, and chastise his doctrine, and conduct, as to pass well and easy with every body, in these mild times: or he may so neutralize and dilute his zeal for the truth, by what is called charity, as to expose himself to little suffering or inconvenience for Christ's sake. And a professor of religion in his more ordinary standing, may conduct himself upon a similar principle, and flatter himself upon the same satisfaction, but such an attachment to Christ's holy religion, and such a mode of vindicating it will never reform the world. Hence then we see that God's promises to his people, as such, are not of exemption from trouble and affliction in his service, but rather of support and succour in affliction endured for the truth's sake. The criteria of Christian character then, and the favour of God are not to be estimated so much in the sum of trouble the professor *escapes*, as in the trouble he *endures*, and the support afforded him under it. "In the world ye *shall* have tribulation—but in ME ye shall have peace."

SECONDLY. *When God's promises are apprehended, great decision and strong faith will be necessary in order to abide the fulfilment of them.* With such grace—*great* and *strong faith*, men will *abide* the day of his coming, though he appears as the refiner's fire, and though he purifies as fuller's soap. Peter thought that he sufficiently understood the nature of Christ's kingdom, and that he was prepared to stand by his master's crown, but it was a mistake, he faltered when only questioned by a silly maid, and before the tongue of an enemy he fell. James and John thought that they could drink of their master's cup and be baptized with his bloody baptism, but when the cup was presented, and the scene of sorrow was opened they forsook him and fled. Paul was better instructed, or he was a more apt learner.—"I will show him, said the Saviour, how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." To this also the Holy Ghost bore witness, saying, that bonds and afflictions awaited him, but said he, "None of these things move me!"—No, nor did they move him—He stood like a rock.

Who will abide the day of his coming!—Here is the test!—

Not who will pray for his coming—thousands will pray for his coming who will do nothing more than pray. Not who long and anxiously wait his coming—many seem so to wait, but withdraw when his coming is announced. But who will ABIDE when he does come, and who will STAND when he appeareth! He comes to search, to try, to correct, to chastise. As a refiner's fire—as fuller's soap; two figures meaning the same thing: the joint figure signifies a severe scrutiny. The refiner's fire is for the choice metal; gold is tried in the fire, and comes out purified gold, lead is consumed and reprobate. Faith that is tried, is more precious than gold, and a faithful man is that precious jewel. The fuller's soap is to cleanse and to make clear our garments, and a piece of well wrought stuff will effectually bear the scrutiny of the searching alkali. The painted hypocrite will never stand this fuller's process. And the formalist too, will find a sad consumption of his "wood, hay, and stubble," before this refiner's fire. As far as this applies to the sons of Levi, it describes that minister who can endure and stand upon his watch tower;—not one that can yield to circumstances, and bow and temporize, and calculate upon risks and probabilities, and take *all things* into consideration, so as to decide always on means and measures most suited to his own personal comfort and advantage, "not caring for the flock." "For he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." As it applies to Christians generally, let me observe,

That God has a system of instrumentality and of means in the agency of his professing people, they, are workers together with him, they are God's husbandry—God's building! The end of a man's conversion is not wholly answered in his single salvation. For though the ministry of the word is the great means of bringing sinners to the acknowledgment of Christ, yet all the followers of the Lord Jesus are called to a general coadjutorship in the work of gathering souls into his kingdom. St. John in his third epistle brings to our view a good man named *Gaius*, an ordinary disciple, but still in a certain sense a fellow-labourer with the apostle in the work of the gospel. The whole church bore witness of his la-

bour of love. This same *Gaius* I apprehend, is spoken of more than once by St. Paul, and what so magnifies his name is, his peculiar attachment to all the brethren, and to strangers who laboured in the kingdom and patience of Jesus—Paul denominates him his *host*, and the *host* of the whole church; he entertained the messengers of Christ and espoused them, and because they were pilgrims and strangers, and had no certain dwelling-place, took them into his own house and refreshed them with the hospitalities of his family. What was his worldly estate or standing we know nothing in detail, but from circumstances we should conclude that he was a man of good condition as to wealth; perhaps he was of sickly constitution, but in soul a prosperous man, in mind and virtue a *Nehemiah*, decided, zealous, persevering, enduring. There are others of similar distinction. Priscilla and Aquila, a poor couple that wrought at tent making for their bread, who could lay down their own necks for the life of an apostle: and in how many instances they aided by their humble labours a gospel ministry, time would fail us now to say: and indeed we can mention the names of only an individual or two more, such as *Luke* the beloved physician, *Onesiphorus* with his household, and *Philemon* and Mary and Phœbe; the two latter were women greatly beloved and greatly enduring for the sake of that CHURCH for which CHRIST shed his most precious blood. Let us now see whether we can find such decision and faith so abounding in our day.

A man when he is converted and brought out into the liberty of the gospel, concludes at once that he is free to make the best of his privileges for himself, that no one has any right to dictate to him, how and in what manner he shall pursue his Christian course, the whole church is before him where to choose. He accordingly gets into union with some body of professing Christians, among whom there is a great quiet, much outward respect and much visible prosperity: he sees nothing here to endanger his soul, but much, on the contrary, to promote soul solace, and to help him on his heavenly way: here he intends to settle down and to thrive in religion —and perhaps he may, or he may think it will be so, and the chief end that he has in view in his profession, will doubtless be answered: but to me such a profession of Christianity is little better

than a proud formality, a worldly dream, a deception that the man is practising upon himself and upon the church—indeed what is it but the ebullition of self love—a thing very destitute of the supreme love of God! And as to the peculiar character of the *Christian*, what is there of this character about it? Jesus says, "if any man will be my disciple let him deny *himself*, and take up his cross and follow ME." A true Christian is the servant of Christ, and he works with his master in the same service. The work of God is not performed in a way that is in agreement with the works of the flesh. The apostle says, "I suffer all things for the elect's sake." Christ was made perfect through suffering, and we must have fellowship with Christ in his sufferings if we would reign with him in his glory. All our missionaries whom we send out into all the world, we charge in the most solemn terms, to bear hardness, to endure affliction, to be content with little, to fight manfully under Christ's banner:—but how is it that we who stay at home, are to avoid labour—to evade suffering—to be greedy of the world—to decline the battle? Are we not ambassadors for Christ in the same world of enemies? Have we not to meet the same host of foes? Have we not to resist the same opposition—the same sin—the same unbelief—the same course of this world? Yes, to all this we are called by the same heavenly master. And it is a service too we have chosen. How anxious some of us have been that we should be employed in the Lord's service; as priests or as Levites we have been engaged; our master has come and appointed us our labour, but brethren can we abide the appointment, can we stand when he appeareth? Alas, the work is objected to by many of Christ's professed servants; the burden is declined because in faithfully fulfilling the engagement they would be exposed to reproach or to contempt from ungodly men.—And yet this same reproach or contempt is the very thing they should have expected, such treatment was foretold and even promised as a criterion of truth in the case, and yet some cannot abide the test nor stand to their own engagement.

But still greater difficulties present themselves. A man may show himself manly and resist stoutly when he is contending in good company, when he has aid and embodied strength around,

or, as we say, the odds in his favour, then it is a hopeful contest: or should he fall, he falls not alone. But it is a hard thing for a man to maintain his convictions, and act up to them, when in so doing he is left alone, and others who ought to be *with* him are not only *not* with him, but *against* him. This is a trial and a severe one too—a refiner's fire and fuller's soap: but God's people are not unfrequently presented to us in these circumstances. Christ, the great exemplar, stood alone, of the people there were none with him, but he did stand or we had all fallen to rise no more. Moses was alone in his choice of service and all against him, but he endured as seeing him who is invisible. Nehemiah was worse than alone—he was more troubled with his friends than by his enemies, and yet by the fear of God alone he held on his way. Jeremiah, how deserted and how persecuted and yet how firm and decided! The three children—Daniel, Paul, James and John with many others deserted, interdicted, derided, driven, cast out and yet holding fast, nothing terrified by their adversaries. This the character Christ's holy religion will establish upon earth. Now, have we attained to it in any tolerable measure? some indeed, are called to more severe duties than are others, but all are called to decision and distinctness of character, and this is what he is coming to test as gold is tried in the fire. Our time, if not our subject is exhausted, but no apology is necessary on this score, people being willing now adays to attend protracted meetings to any length, so that if any apology be in season it is for our short comings heretofore. We will nevertheless hasten to a close, when we have listened to some important instruction suggested by the doctrine of the text. And

First, If we abide what our subject has taught us, we shall be led to conclude *that there is a great deal of false religion in the world*:—and what is still worse, this false religion is to be suspected, to say the least, where there ought to be the best evidence of true and unfeigned godliness. It is a maxim with us brethren, that there is no more true religion in the world than there is holiness—yes, all our religion will be brought to this test. *False* religion must be considered apart from *irreligion*. The sum of true religion is not to be estimated upon what is left after all the ungodli-

ness of men is reckoned up and cast out, I would that it were, the world then would exhibit a very hopeful aspect—but after you have subtracted from the whole sum of man's real spiritual condition throughout the world, so much for the ignorance, barbarity, and superstition of paganism—so much for the sheer wickedness of unbridled lust as manifest through all nature—so much for all that worldliness which springs out of the subtleties of infidelity, and the refinements of false philosophy, we are not to take what is left for pure religion, another deduction must be made for the large assumption of the christian name, as a mere convenience without a particle of Christianity being even professed—and after this, not to notice the condition of some who are in woful errors through wilful ignorance or weakness, or blind prejudice, what a large proportion of professing Christians are to be reckoned off, who fail of the grace of God by means of an empty formality, or a vile systematized hypocrisy! Such was the state of things when God our Saviour came in the flesh. The whole world was lying in darkness, and the Jews, the only enlightened people of all mankind, were abusing their privileges and perverting the ordinances of their God to such an extent, as to fill up their whole theocracy with formalism, superstition, and hypocrisy. And thus it was, to a great degree, when our prophet Malachi bore the burden of the word of the Lord among this people, as we have seen. But the question with us is, how is it now and with us too? Can we, upon a fair and candid examination, bring our minds to the conviction, that the great bulk of religion as visible before us, is real and approved in the sight of God. My brethren, I would press this examination upon you, to your soul's health I trust it will be pursued, to your soul's injury it cannot be. I have not time now to press this matter in detail, your wisdom and honesty must supply the deficiency on my part, and the Lord enable you to be faithful to yourselves. I will only add under this head of improvement, that there is much damage accruing to religion from the way in which, and the circumstances under which a christian profession is assumed. In these days of excitement and of enterprise, every thing almost is done by extreme pressure and by the vehement application of all human power—so religion is impelled and driven on;

but I have lived long enough to see into the real efficiency of these things—many of them at least. Multitudes profess religion, not for the sake of the Christian communion, so much as for union with a powerful and influential party, in which worldly and political interest is involved. Not a few join the church in a time of popular excitement, when profession is in vogue, while nothing could induce them thus to commit themselves, when the profession of religion was in low repute and its ministry despised. When singleness of heart and a single handed decision were demanded, no gospel call was sufficiently powerful to prevail on them to covenant with their Lord, but as soon as the offence of the cross ceases then they become disciples—as soon as the war is over they volunteer into the army. Now with these things before us, we can account for the quantity of false religion we have in the visible communion of professing Christians. We are introduced to a

Second article of application. We learn from the subject the great duty of Christ's ministers. Malachi was a faithful man, he shunned not to declare all the counsel of God. He told the people, to whom he was sent, honestly and in plain terms, that they were likely to be very much deceived in their own apprehensions of MESSIAH'S coming: and as Malachi left the doctrine, so John the Baptist, the Saviour's herald, took it up. He told the most flaming professors of religion in his day, that they were a generation of vipers, and that they must repent and bring forth fruits meet for repentance, or their Messiah, in whose coming they professed greatly to delight, would count them as chaff and burn them up with unquenchable fire. I am by no means prepared to admit, that a severe and frowning ministry is the most likely to be useful—but we are to be aware of the opposite extreme, especially when such a subject as that now before us comes under consideration and more especially still, when so many false teachers are abroad in the earth—when the prophets prophesy smooth things, and the people love to have it so. Yes, my brethren in the work and labour of our common Lord, the day in which we live is characterized by an indistinctness, a latitudinarianism, a kind of charity which goes to neutralize and to render abortive the doctrines of our holy faith, and to break down, and to bear down the discipline

of the church, and to confound the wholesome regimen of divine authority, with the nostrums of imposture, fanaticism, and spiritual despotism. Much of that which is of sovereign importance in the church is reduced to a general expediency, or pronounced to be non-essential. Hence the ministry of the word must be accommodated to the taste and temper of the times and country in which it is exercised—whatever is offered as of primitive and divine appointment, is rejected because the things of yesterday's discovery are more characteristic of an enlightened age, and better adapted to the enterprise of a rising and thriving people. But brethren let us turn away from all such as consent not unto wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness. Let us abide in him for he is faithful and he will give us the crown of life.

Finally, It is impossible to follow the prophet Malachi in his solemn train of admonition and warning upon the FIRST coming of Christ without feeling more solemn awe of his SECOND coming! For so sure as he came first in the flesh, so sure will he come again the second time with great power and glory. So multifarious are the opinions of men on the second coming of Christ, that a mere reference to that event is objected to as an insufferable speculation—a subject on which we can know nothing to our present spiritual advantage. I have no wisdom *above* what is written, but with what *is* written I know that our Lord inspired all his disciples at the time of his departure, with the expectation of his return; he enjoined upon them *waiting*, *watching*, and *prayer!* For ages the church held this position, and it was the *golden era* of the church. Christ did not tell his followers *when* he should come, nor was it for them to know—it was their privilege and duty to wait—it was so with the old testament saints, they waited for the consolation of Israel, and they were found in a happy posture when he came; and so it will be when he shall come again. But this most certainly is not the posture of the church in these days—Christians have no idea of his coming, till after the lapse of many years—a millennium certainly first; and for all I *know* it may be "a thousand years"—and it may be but "one day!" And I am rather inclined to the *present day* for his coming from the circum-

stance that *men do not expect him, nor look for him.*—Yes, that is the time when he has declared that he will come, WHEN MEN LOOK NOT FOR HIM! If any thing can quicken his approach, infidelity in that event must be that thing, "where is the promise of his coming?" say these skeptics. And "when the Son of Man cometh *shall* he find faith on the earth?" If that servant shall say in his heart, my Lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him in sunder and appoint him his portion with *unbelievers!* BLESSED ARE ALL THOSE THAT WAIT FOR HIM.—Amen.

THE JUDGMENT: OR, CHRIST'S SECOND ADVENT.

Lo! He comes, in clouds descending,
Every eye shall see Him plain,
Whilst ten thousand saints attending,
Fill the glory of his train!
Hallelujah, Christ in *Spirit* comes to reign.

Behold the bright and morning star,
Blazing with eternal flame,
Hark!—Seraphic songs from far
Chant the Great Redeemer's name;
Hallelujah, echoes through the vaulted frame.

See the glorious God descending,
See the Angels, in array!
Hark! the awful trumpet sounding
Come to JUDGMENT,—come away!
Hallelujah—come to Judgment!—come away.

'Tis done!—The awful process ended!
Nature's clouds are swept away.
The King of Glory, now descended,
Opens an eternal day,
Hallelujah!—hail; all hail, eternal day!